1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

festival, hunts, dances, and thatching a newly built house. Rivalry between villages is still prevalent, and formerly feuds (*maradalé*) between villages were frequent.

Most people in Coorg live in villages, either themselves cultivating or supervising the cultivation of land. Exact figures are available only for 1931 when sixty out of every thousand lived in towns, while the rest lived in villages: i.e. 94 per cent. of the population lived in villages.[1] Even now, excepting educated men in government service, or in one of the learned professions, and a few commercial men, others in general prefer to live in their natal villages on account of their close attachment to their ancestral lands.

There are only two towns in Coorg, Mercara, the capital, with a population of 7,112, and Vīrarājpēṭ, with 4,106.

The 1941 Census mentions the total population of Coorg as 168,726, but it does not enlighten us as to the composition of this population. The details are, however, available for 1931 when the total population was 163,327, and of this, 146,007 were Hindus, 13,777 Muslims, 3,425 Christians, and the balance of 118 was accounted for by Jains, Buddhists, and Parsis. Coorgs, with a strength of 41,026, formed the largest single group amongst the Hindus.[2]

III

All the important languages spoken in Coorg are Dravidian, with the exception of Hindusthāni and English. Again, detailed figures are available only for 1931 when 62,769 spoke Kannaḍa, 44,585 Koḍagi, the dialect of Coorgs, 14,914 Malayāḷam, 14,275 Tuḷu, and 10,026 Yerava, the dialect of the Yerava tribe. There were 3,007 Tamil-speakers, fewer in fact than the speakers of the Indo-Aryan language, Hindusthāni, who numbered 4,378.[3]

Professor M. B. Emeneau considers that 'the Dravidian language spoken by Coorgs is an independent language, and shows characteristics that in part connect it closely with Kannaḍa, in part with the languages of the Malabar coast, especially Malayāḷam'.[4]

Coorgs make use of the Kannaḍa script on those occasions when they wish to reduce Koḍagi into writing. Such occasions are not,

[1] *Census of India*, 1931, vol. xiii, p. 7.
[2] Ibid., pp. 41–42.
[3] Ibid., p. 38.
[4] In a letter to the author.

professed patronage of the Brahmans and that they gradually dropped into brahmanical habits of life and thought. A good many now wear the holy thread, and all profess to abstain from meat and fermented liquors. The return to Brahman initiation and dress was brought about by a Havika Brahman whose family exercised spiritual influence over the Amma Kodagas. They are still unlettered. There is a tradition current among them that in former times one half of Coorg belonged to the Ammas, and the rest to the Coorgs. The Ammas by virtue of their priesthood held their land free of rent. Their lands are even now very lightly taxed.

Internal Structure

The Amma Coorgs form a homogeneous community. There are two gotras among them, the Baradwaja gotra and Viswamitra gotra. They marry within the same gotra.

Marriage Customs and Ceremonies

The Amma Coorgs do not intermarry with the Coorgs, but the separation may be of recent origin. Marriage settlement is made only after the agreement of horoscopes. The young man's father, uncle, and other close relations assemble, when coconuts, plantains, and betel leaves are handed to the bride in token of settlement. The auspicious day for celebration is fixed to send invitations to the relatives on both sides. The dress and ornaments to be given to the bride are also settled. The preliminary formalities that are gone through are :—

1. The boy's party going to the house of the bride.
2. Their welcome with refreshments.
3. Nischithambulam.

The essential formalities are *mukadarsana*, and garlanding and *panigrahana*, tali-tying, presenting the bride with the wedding dress and ornaments, and feasting. There is no *homam* as among the Coorgs, but there exists the cutting of plantains in common with the Coorgs. On the arrival of the bride at the bridegroom's house, she puts rice on the lamp. On the third day they bathe, and celebrate the *sobhanaprasta*, if the girl has attained puberty already.

Pregnancy and Childbirth

When a girl becomes pregnant, *pumsavana* and *simantha* are performed. When she is about to become a mother, she is confined to a separate room. Her mother or some aged woman acts as midwife. Pollution lasts for eleven days after which she bathes to become pure. But it is only after 40 days that ganga puja is performed, when she bathes and becomes pure. Only then can she enter the kitchen. Cradling the baby takes place on the eleventh day. The naming ceremony takes place the same day.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

the house or by a visiting neighbour whether male or female with great respect. The young man lays aside whatever burdens his hands, puts off his shoes and with folded hands first raised to the forehead, bows down and touches the feet of his senior, who lays his hand on the young man's head pronouncing a blessing, when the youth rises and repeats the ceremony to others.

The Coorgs are a hardy race and bear with fortitude a great deal of hardship, especially during the monsoon, whilst engaged with their rice cultivation. Exposed to wet and cold and often prostrate with fever, they soon regain their strength and old men and women of 70 or 80 years are not uncommon amongst them.

In the times of their Rajahs, during their wars with the Mysoreans and Malabars and in their marauding expeditions the Coorgs proved themselves brave soldiers and were dreaded for their fierce intrepidity; but their strength lay especially in their mountain fastnesses and behind the shelter of their native woods and the formidable breastworks extending for miles along the crests of hills. Since they have come under the rule of the British Government their warlike spirit has found no scope; but they are still a brave and manly race, who in time of need would doubtless stand by their new rulers with devoted loyalty. At the hunt of the tiger, the bison or the elephant no true Coorg shirks the dangerous sport; but with nerve and coolness and wary cunning he will dodge the advancing beast and with keen eye and steady hand fire at him at close quarters.

The intellectual and moral faculties of the Coorgs have for ages been neglected, and consequently up to the present day they are both ignorant and superstitious. The worship of demons and of departed spirits has usurped among them the worship of God. Charms and sorceries abound all over the country. Disease among men and cattle is readily ascribed to the Curses and witchcraft of enemies.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

197 slaves, the Holeyas, have a language of their own, which is intelligible to themselves only. Upon closer examination, however, it is apparent, that the Kodagu tongue is but a dialect more or less related to the 5 principal Dravidian languages—the Telugu, Tamil, Malayálam, Tulu and Canarese—but eminently so to the older forms of these languages.

• [212] [214] The old Coorg chants (Palamé) have been written for ages past with Canarese letters, and the first attempt in printing a Coorg Grammar has likewise been carried out in Canarese type, also the Canarese numerical figures are used by the Coorgs. The Kodagu language is shorter, more simple, but less refined than the Canarese and a convenient medium for conversation; by its contracted, rounded forms with abrupt terminations in half vowels, it does not require a great exertion of the organs of speech and admits of chewing betel and retaining the precious juice, whilst the flow of conversation is uninterruptedly carried on. Indeed a beginner should practise the pronunciation with his mouth half full of water, till he can speak without spilling any. The Kodagu language has not the force and expressiveness of the Canarese, but it glides more readily over the lips. It is rich in words and forms and, as the Coorg chants attest, admirably suited for expressing easy flowing poetry of a humorous or solemn strain.

194 [212] Of the 51 letters that constitute the new Canarese alphabet old Canarese has only 47—the Kodagu language appropriates but 33, viz. 12 vowels, 1 half consonant, 16 classified and 4 unclassified consonants, for it rejects all aspirated consonants.

The vowels are: the short and long a ಅ, ಆ, e ಎ, ಏ, i ಇ, ಈ, o ಒ, ಓ, u ಉ, ಊ, and the diphthongs ei ಐ and ou ಔ.

The half consonant or medium between vowel and consonant is ಂ which sounds like m, n, or ng, according to position.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

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The 16 classified consonants are: the

Gutturals:	ಕ ka	ಗ ga	ಙ gna			
Palatals:	ಚ cha	ಜ ja	ಞ nya			
Cerebrals:	ಟ ṭa	ಡ ḍa	ಣ ṇa	(ಳ ḷa)		
Dentals:	ತ ta	ದ da	ನ na			
Labials:	ಪ pa	ಬ ba	ಮ ma			

The 4 unclassified consonants are the Liquids:

ಯ ya ರ ra ಲ la ವ va

It would lead me too far, to enter upon the method of changing this simple system of letters into their various combinations; this may be found in the Rev. Thos. Hodson's Canarese Grammar or in Captain Cole's Elementary Coorg Grammar, which in its etymological part is based upon the former. I may only remark, that in writing Kodagu with the Canarese alphabet there is a frequent use of half letters which are denoted by a peculiar flourish above the respective consonants, to preclude, as it were, the ordinarily used definite final vowel; Ex. ಮ್ = mă, ದ್ = dă instead of ಮ ma and ದ da. Yet these half letters are not mute consonants, but are followed by either of the two peculiar short and dull vowels ŭ and ŭ which frequently occur in German and French. The former (ŭ) is pronounced like e in the French relative pronoun "que", or the ŭ in the German "Götter", the latter (ŭ) sounds like the French u in "vertu" or the ŭ in the German "Mütter". As a general rule in the Kodagu language every half letter at the end of a syllable, whether mediate or final, is pronounced with the consounding short nasal vowel ŭ, where in new Canarese the same syllable would terminate in ಮು and in old Canarese in ಮ. Ex. Can. kurubaa. Kg. kurumbŭ = a shepherd. But where the half letter in Kodagu implies the vowel u in Canarese, it is pronounced ŭ; Ex. Can. ಇದು, Kg. ಇದ್ = this.

[212]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

The people learn them by heart or by writing, using, as already observed, the Canarese alphabet. Some of them, as the Harvest and the Wedding Chant, which show the Kodagu dialect in all its peculiarities, seem to be very old and their authors are unknown. The latter mentions the country as being divided into 35 Nâds or districts, and consequently must have existed previous to the events related in the Râjendranâme, in which the country is differently divided and which begins with the year 1633. Others are of a more recent date and contain numerous modern Canarese expressions. In fact with slight modifications the set poetical phrases of the old stock serve the Coorg bard on any occasion for new compositions; but these are usually local and trivial and obtain no circulation. The author of the epic song on the war with Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan, which, however, has no poetical merit, is Boppanda Mâdeya who died in 1868; and the Queen's Song, which testifies to the loyalty of the Coorgs, was composed by Chôkandra Appeya in 1839. Of these songs little was known until my late Assistant, Mr. Graeter, took up the subject and after his study of the Kodagu dialect made them accessible to the English reader in the translation given.

Reflecting the Coorg mind in its own language, and uninfluenced by European culture, these songs are highly interesting and in their simple beauty often evince considerable poetical merit, whilst others please by the vein of hearty good humour, that runs through their lines.

The rules of Hindu versification do not apply to the Coorg songs; these are cast in a less artistic mould and have something of the free mountain air about them. It is true, they move not in the gay, iambic foot; the more dignified trochaic measure suits the Coorg mind better; each line contains 7 or 8 syllables, but the accent is not carefully observed, nor is there either rhyme or alliteration. In its simple form the